

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF VERMONT**

RÜMEYSA ÖZTÜRK,
Petitioner

v.

No. 2:25-cv-00374

DONALD J. TRUMP, et al.,
Respondents.

DECLARATION OF ANNA GARSON

I, Anna Garson, declare as follows:

1. I am the Director of Tufts International Center and the Principal Designated School Official (PDSO) and Responsible Officer (RO) for Tufts University (“Tufts”). In my role, I oversee the administration of Tufts F-1 and J-1 visa programs and employment-based immigration processes for Tufts-sponsored faculty and staff. I also have access to and maintain F-1 student and J-1 exchange visitor records in the Department of Homeland Security’s Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). I have worked in this field for ten years and have served in this role since July 15, 2024.

2. I have personal knowledge of the contents of this declaration, or have knowledge of the matters based on my review of information and records gathered by Tufts University personnel, and could testify thereto.

3. On the evening of Tuesday, March 25, 2025, I learned that Rümeyssa Öztürk, a Tufts doctoral student from Turkey and F-1 visa holder, was taken into custody by the Department of Homeland Security as she was leaving her off-campus apartment in Somerville, Massachusetts. Through subsequent review of Ms. Öztürk’s Student and

Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) record, I learned that the record had been terminated by “DHS Official” that same evening at 7:32p.m. for the stated reason of “OTHERWISE FAILING TO MAINTAIN STATUS – Pursuant to Section 221(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C 1201(i).” Prior to the night of her arrest, Ms. Öztürk’s SEVIS record was in active status, and she had worked with her International Center Advisor/Designated School Official to complete the reporting requirements outlined for student-visa holders in 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f).

4. A screenshot of the Event History page of Ms. Öztürk’s SEVIS record, which I took on March 25, 2025, is attached as Exhibit 1. It shows the expanded view of the March 25, 2025 SEVIS termination by the DHS official, with the stated reason for termination. I have redacted the names of four additional Tufts University Designated School Officials previously involved in SEVIS record updates for Ms. Öztürk from the “Performed By” column of the SEVIS Event History to protect their privacy due to the high-profile nature of Ms. Öztürk’s case.

5. A screenshot of the Student Information page of Ms. Öztürk’s SEVIS record, which I took on March 25 at or around 8:00 p.m., is attached as Exhibit 2.

6. Since the original “DHS Official” termination on the evening of March 25, 2025, additional changes have been logged to the termination reason provided by DHS in SEVIS. The SEVIS Event History page does not provide the ability to expand and see the details for each update, *see* Exhibit 1, however, through periodic review of the Student Information page of Ms. Öztürk’s SEVIS record, I have been able to capture screenshots that record these changes.

7. The first and initial SEVIS termination on March 25 indicated the aforementioned termination reason of “OTHERWISE FAILING TO MAINTAIN STATUS – Pursuant to Section 221(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C 1201(i).”

8. At 9:18 and 9:19a.m. on March 26, 2025, the Event History page for Ms. Öztürk’s SEVIS record reflects two entries by “DHS Official” to “Change Termination Reason.” *See* Exhibit 1. A screenshot that I took of the Student Information page of Ms. Öztürk’s record on March 28, 2025, attached as Exhibit 3, shows that after March 26, the termination reason was updated to “OTHERWISE FAILING TO MAINTAIN STATUS,” with further details removed.

9. The Event History Page for Ms. Öztürk’s SEVIS record also reflects a “Manual Data Change” by “SEVIS Maintenance” and shows that on April 8, 2025, the termination reason was altered to “OTHER - Individual identified in criminal records check and/or has had their VISA revoked. SEVIS record has been terminated.” A screenshot that I took of the Student Information page of Ms. Öztürk’s record on April 9, 2025, showing this updated termination reason, is attached as Exhibit 4.

10. I observed that subsequent students at Tufts University who had their SEVIS records terminated also had the termination reason “OTHER - Individual identified in criminal records check and/or has had their VISA revoked. SEVIS record has been terminated.”

11. In addition to these changes made in Ms. Öztürk’s SEVIS record, the morning after her arrest, on March 26, 2025, at 10:31a.m., I was copied on an emailed SEVIS Designation Termination Notice addressed to Ms. Öztürk from the Student and Exchange Visitor Program. The notice was backdated March 25, 2025, and stated that Ms. Öztürk’s

SEVIS designation had been terminated “pursuant to 237(a)(1)(C)(i) and/or 237(a)(4)(C)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.” The notice also stated that if Ms. Öztürk remained in the United States, she may be contacted by immigration officials or placed in removal proceedings. At the time of receipt of this notice, Ms. Öztürk had already been detained and I now know that she was being transported to Louisiana. This notice is attached as Exhibit 5.

12. As of the date of this declaration, and despite Ms. Öztürk’s release from detention, the database shows that her SEVIS record remains terminated for the reason of “OTHER - Individual identified in criminal records check and/or has had their VISA revoked. SEVIS record has been terminated.” *See* Exhibit 1. Because her record remains terminated, I am unable to provide Ms. Öztürk with documentation of F-1 status nor am I able to make any updates to her F-1 record to reflect address changes, program updates, or other reporting requirements outlined for student-visa holders in 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f).

13. Since Ms. Öztürk was taken into DHS custody on March 25, a total of two enrolled F-1 international students (Ms. Öztürk and one additional student) and seven post-graduation F-1 OPT (Optional Practical Training) participants from Tufts had their SEVIS records/F-1 status terminated by DHS. To date, seven of the nine terminated SEVIS records at Tufts University have been returned to active status—*i.e.*, everyone except Ms. Öztürk and one other person. Six reactivated records are F-1 visa holders who are alumni on post-graduation OPT (Optional Practical Training). The seventh reactivated record is a current student.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on May 21, 2025, at Tufts University.


ANNA GARSON